

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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R 100906Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3140
INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI
AMCONSUL UDORN
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, TH
SUBJECT: KHUKRIT PRAMOT'S POLITICAL FANCIES

REF: FBIS BANGKOK D100200 MAY 74

SUMMARY: ANSWERING A QUESTION AFTER HIS ADDRESS TO THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB OF THAILAND, M.R. KHUKRIT PRAMOT SAID THAT HE WAS INTERESTED IN ELECTORAL POLITICS AND BECOMING PRIME MINISTER. KHUKRIT'S PERFORMANCE WAS GLIB, ENTERTAINING, AND STRESSED THE THEME THAT FEW CIVILIANS WERE QUALIFIED FOR HIGH PUBLIC OFFICE IN THAILAND. END SUMMARY.

1. THE REFERENCE CARRIES MOST OF M.R. KHUKRIT PRAMOT'S WITTICISMS BEFORE THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB OF THAILAND THE EVENING OF MAY 9. THE EMBASSY OFFICER PRESENT AT THE DINNER REPORTS THAT KHUKRIT'S ADMISSION OF POLITICAL AMBITION CAME IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION AFTER HIS ADDRESS. THE PRESENT SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA) SAID HE WAS WILLING TO ASSUME

LEADERSHIP "IF NO ONE ELSE DOES" AND MENTIONED THAT HE WAS IN THE PROCESS OF FORMING A POLITICAL PARTY. HIS ADMISSION GENERATED A FLURRY OF QUESTIONS WHICH HE DUCKED SAYING THAT HE WAS NOT YET PREPARED TO DISCLOSE ALL HIS PREPARATIONS. HE SAID THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES DID NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES POLITICIANS, BUT "SOCIAL ENGINEERS".

2. THE MAIN THEME OF KHUKRIT'S ADDRESS WAS THAT YEARS OF MILITARY RULE HAD LEFT THAILAND WITHOUT TRAINED CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP. THERE ARE FEW GOOD CANDIDATES FOR EITHER PRIME MINISTERIAL OR CABINET POSTS. HE SAID THAT AFTER THE COMING ELECTIONS, THAILAND WILL HAVE A PARLIAMENT BUT NOT A GOVERNMENT. HE PROPHESED THAT NO CABINET WILL LAST LONG AND THAT THAILAND WILL PROBABLY FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF PRE-DEGAULLE FRANCE.

3. COMMENT: KHUKRIT HAS HAD BARELY CONCEALED POLITICAL AMBITIONS SINCE HE ENTERED THE APPOINTED NLA WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF NATIONAL CONVENTION VOTES LAST DECEMBER, AND SUBSEQUENTLY BECAME NLA SPEAKER. THERE ARE LONG-STANDING RUMORS THAT KHUKRIT MIGHT TEAM UP WITH THAWIT KLINPRATHUM WHO HAS ORGANIZED THE "FREE NATION" PARTY. KHUKRIT'S POSITION IN THE NLA CERTAINLY HAS POLITICAL TRADE OFF POTENTIAL, AND HE HAS SPOKEN SOFTLY ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE MILITARY IN THAILAND. KHUKRIT IS GROOMING HIMSELF FOR A ROLE AS A COMPROMISE LEADER AND, DESPITE HIS WITTY AND SARCASTIC PRESENTATION, MAY BE TAKING HIMSELF SERIOUSLY.

MASTERS

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